

# the INDEPENDENT

A Newsletter for Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital

[www.Madonna.org](http://www.Madonna.org)

February 19, 2010

402.489.7102

The Madonna Independent, an employee newsletter of Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, is published every other Friday by the Marketing and Public Relations department. To submit a story idea, news item, announcement or recognition information, contact Tami Rudder, editor, at 486-8606.

All story ideas, news items, announcements or recognition information must be submitted the Friday before the Independent is printed. **Note: The deadline for the next issue is Friday, Feb. 26.**

*\*The Independent can be viewed online at [www.Madonna.org](http://www.Madonna.org)*

A special act of kindness



Love, Chocolate and Health



## Patience and humor fuel woman's rehabilitation journey

There is an English phrase proposing the virtue of patience that "good things come to those who wait." This proved to be the case with Bev Straka.

The 65-year-old Lincoln, Neb., native was diagnosed 16 years ago with Type 2 diabetes. Juggling the roles of wife, mother and grandmother, Bev struggled to keep her diabetes under control. Last August, Bev went into a diabetic coma and woke up surrounded by paramedics. Her blood sugar had plummeted to 23. "I should have been dead!" exclaimed Bev. She resolved to be more diligent about checking her blood sugar levels.

Like many people with diabetes, Bev was prone to dry skin. She'd soak her legs daily and apply lotion. Bev's husband, Ed, usually filled the bathtub for her. On Sept. 13, Ed wasn't home and Bev decided to

run the tap water herself, submerging just her left leg. When Ed returned, he took one look at his wife's leg and realized she'd severely burned it. Bev was later diagnosed with diabetic neuropathy, a deadening of nerves in the feet and legs that leaves her without the sensation of pain.

Bev was rushed to St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center where doctors performed skin grafts on her second degree burns and monitored her leg closely. On Oct. 28, doctors informed Bev, and her family, that her leg would need to be amputated. The news initially shocked Bev and the thought of losing a limb was upsetting. "I quickly realized, if it's got to be, then, it's got to be," stated Bev firmly. Her son, Randy, had a hard time dealing

with what his mom had to endure. Bev told Randy she was grateful to still be alive. "At that point, I accepted that this is how I'm going to be for the rest of my life," said Bev.

On Nov. 2, 2009, Bev transferred to Madonna, but her slow-healing amputation site delayed the start of therapy. Annie O'Campo, wound and ostomy specialty nurse, remembers reassuring an impatient Bev that the wait would be worth it. Bev spent Thanksgiving, Christmas, family birthdays and her anniversary in bed. "That waiting was the hardest part," admitted Bev.

Jan. 21 was an emotional day for Bev when she finally received her prosthetic. She walked 160 yards. "The tears fell that day; it felt great to stand on two feet again," Bev said. She gained strength pedaling on the Nu-Step recumbent crosstrainer, tackling the stairs and soon

transferred independently to her bed and shower.

Lori Holz, physical therapist, admired Bev's sense of humor during her rehabilitation. "She always had a positive attitude and added humor to her therapy sessions," shared Lori. Bev's light-heartedness also helped her grandchildren feel comfortable with her amputation. "When they visited me, I'd pick up my prosthetic and wave goodbye," chuckled Bev.

During her last day at Madonna, Bev walked 200 feet. "Look at her walking with her prosthesis, standing tall and showing off her rehab accomplishments," said Annie. Bev beamed proudly.



Madonna staff members Annie O'Campo (L) and Lori Holz discovered that Bev Straka's positivity and sense of humor were still intact following the amputation of her left leg.

## Kudos for Madonna staff

*The following letter was received by Madonna's President and CEO Marsha Lommel on Feb. 10:*

Dear Marsha:

On Nov. 17, 2009, I had a left hip revision at Creighton University Medical Center in Omaha. On Dec. 5, I was on crutches and fell down my front stairs, breaking my other hip. I was lifelifted to BryanLGH Hospital and on Dec. 8, I transferred to Madonna.

I was on the Subacute unit for eight days and wanted you to know how well I was taken care of by Dr. Martin and the entire staff. They were fantastic! The nurses and therapists were cheerful, compassionate and professional. Whenever I needed something, no matter what time of the day or night, the staff responded quickly to my request.

During my stay at Madonna, I did not meet a single grouchy person. Since I am a health care professional, I really appreciated the excellence that seems to be the modus operandi on the Subacute unit. In addition, the food was great and I loved ordering from the menu for the following day.

I have shared my appreciation with staff by sending a Valentino's gift card, but I wanted to let you know what a fine job your staff is doing.

Sincerely,

Dr. Roger Aveyard, LIMHP  
Beatrice, Neb.

## Your opinion counts

Thank you to the 668 employees that completed Madonna's first Safety Culture Survey.

The participation rate was over 47 percent! Although the response rate fell short of the Jeans Day goal, we appreciate everyone who took time to share their opinions.

Stay tuned to future issues of *The Independent* for survey results and future plans to enhance the safety culture at Madonna.

## Special Olympics volunteers still needed

Lincoln is the proud host of the national games of the Special Olympics from July 18-23. With the games just five months away, the push is on to recruit more volunteers.

Many Madonna employees signed up or received information at an open house held at the hospital in November. Interested employees are encouraged to sign up to become a volunteer by going to [www.2010specialolympics.org](http://www.2010specialolympics.org), and click "Discover How."

Volunteer positions include: security, event logistics, welcome committee, delegations services, receptions, ceremonies, information services, technology, cheering committee, awards, media services, food services and much more. Anyone 16 and older may register to volunteer. You can sign-up to work with friends, family and co-workers. Volunteering is a great opportunity for high school seniors needing citizenship issues hours next year.

Volunteering at the Special Olympics National Games is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Don't miss out on this meaningful way to get involved!

## 616 pounds shed

Congratulations Lifestyle Challenge participants! In the first month of competition, the cumulative weight loss was 616 pounds, and 3,993 physical activity hours were logged. The Challenge is off to a great start, and 2010 is shaping up to be a wonderful year. Keep it going, teams! The next check-in will be March 3, from 7:30-11:30 a.m. at Main Campus and 1-2 p.m. at ProActive.

Lifestyle Challenge results from the first month are posted. Visit any of the following areas to check your team ranking: the Employee Lounge bulletin board, the Wellness board outside the Commons Café (south wall), the bulletin board outside Employee Health or log onto Madonna's Intranet and click "Employee Health & Wellness."

## Employee Focus: *Fun factoids about Betty*



Betty Rupert  
Styling Salon Supervisor  
MRH Employee for 33 years

- 1 My first job was waiting on customers in my parents' cafe and bar.
- 2 My Dad trained race horses and I spent my childhood summers at the race track.
- 3 I had open heart surgery at age 20.
- 4 My favorite pastime is spending time with my husband, three sons and eight grandchildren.
- 5 I can't whistle.

I love meeting all the thousands of grandmas and grandpas that have passed through the salon. Some of their stories are priceless.

## Quad Rugby tournament results

Madonna ProActive hosted Nebraska's first organized quad rugby tournament Jan. 23-24. Players from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Colorado, Iowa and Nebraska competed in the 10-game contest. First place went to the team from Minneapolis, second place to the Denver, team and third place to the Midwest Rugby Rebels, with players from Nebraska and Iowa.

Kipp Ransom, a Midwest Rugby Rebel member and rehabilitation counselor at Madonna, enjoys traveling with the team. "We've been playing together for about three years," said Kipp. The team has participated in several out of state tournaments and is mostly self-funded.

Quad rugby is a physical game with complex strategies for playing both offense and defense. It is played with a volleyball on a basketball-size court with goal lines marked by cones and a lined-off "key" area. The intensive, competitive sport provides opportunity, support and structure for competitive wheelchair rugby to people with activity limitations.



The Midwest Rugby Rebels team with quad rugby players from Nebraska and Iowa, placed third in the January tournament at Madonna ProActive. Back Row (L to R) Dave Duncan, Ben Stahl, Tim Hobbs, Kipp Ransom, Jake Lamberti and Blake Jorgenson. Front Row (L to R) Bruce Froendt, Jesse Garner, Jason Kerkman and Robert Rieck.

## Transitional Care Unit slated to open April 1

Construction is ahead of schedule on the Transitional Care Unit (TCU) space. "The new unit's name reflects a transition from acute care to the patient's home," explained Melody Gagner, director of nursing. The unit features a home-like environment with a culture of holistic rehabilitation focused on returning the patient home in a timely manner.

Patient room remodels are nearing completion and will result in 11 new TCU private rooms. Additional structural changes to help support the new TCU include new shower/bathroom facilities (increasing the total to three) and a 750-square-foot therapy gym (twice the size of the existing Subacute gym). Both are scheduled for completion by April 1. As a result, the official opening of the TCU has been moved to April 1. Long Term Care and hospital leadership staff members are working to ensure patient care staff and other operational systems are in place to make the transition as smooth as possible.

"The addition of this level of care will help to define St. Jane de Chantal as a premiere long term care facility specializing in rehabilitation, ventilator care, complex medical care and Alzheimer's care, as well as the provision of traditional nursing home care," said Paul Nathenson, vice president of Long Term Care Services. "We will continue to use our holistic focus in providing quality care," added Paul.

Renovation of the activities room on North Station will begin after March 1, but will not be completed by the TCU opening. The earlier completion of the TCU areas allows for construction to begin in sections of the new pediatric hospital. Additional details of the pediatric hospital remodel will be shared in future issues of *The Independent*.

## Blood bank to increase visits

Madonna has supported the Nebraska Community Blood Bank (NCBB) for more than ten years. Several employees requested an increase in the mobile unit's visits, from four to six times per year, enabling blood donors to complete their annual contributions on site.

Beginning in March, staff will have six opportunities to donate blood on campus in 2010. The NCBB is bringing a larger vehicle that will accommodate 25 individuals in a two hour period. Giving a "double" donation, if that is your choice, will also be streamlined.

**The NCBB will be at Madonna on Friday, March 5, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.** To schedule a time, call Jody Luzum in Employee Health at ext. 6413. Please consider giving the gift of life through a blood donation. Your one pint donation can potentially help three individuals. Be the type that gives!

## Heart health: Jim Rea, grateful to be alive

On Feb. 17, 2007, a nagging, but subtle pain and “an aching kind of hurt” eventually caused Jim Rea to seek out medical attention in the emergency room at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital.

It was there that Jim was hit with a double whammy; he was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes and learned he’d had a heart attack. His condition required an emergency balloon angioplasty. During the procedure, a stent would be placed in one of Jim’s arteries to stretch the wall and improve blood flow. Jim watched as the procedure was performed. “Until you’ve been on the table and you’ve had that kind of connection to your own beating heart, I don’t think people really understand how both emotionally and physically draining an experience like that is.” He explained, “I watched the instrument go into the artery, and I literally felt relief the moment the stent opened the blockage. It’s something I never want to have to experience again.”

“Since 2007, I’ve lost 70 pounds,” Jim said. “Some of that was on my own before my heart attack, but some of it happened after I worked with the staff at ProActive.” Jim chose Madonna and the LifeBalance for Heart cardiac rehabilitation for his outpatient recovery based on Madonna’s reputation. “They taught me how to make changes that would last. I learned not just about



**ProActive member and LifeBalance for Heart cardiac rehabilitation program graduate Jim Rea (right) works with Personal Trainer Anthony Sobotka on a balance exercise. A double diagnoses of heart attack and diabetes three years ago changed Jim’s outlook on life. Since 2007, he has lost 70 pounds and has greatly improved his overall wellness.**

exercise, but about proper nutrition. At one point (before LifeBalance for Heart), I was unknowingly starving myself of valuable protein. Once I understood what, when and why my body needed certain nutrients and exercise, I started to see improvements.”

The comprehensive team of nurses and an exercise physiologist, dietitian and doctor, taught Jim how to monitor his food intake to regulate his diabetes while ensuring he had the energy and stamina to improve his cardiac health. LifeBalance for Heart is a Phase II cardiac rehabilitation program designed to help individuals reach their personal level of peak health following cardiovascular disease.

It is nationally certified by the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation (AACVPR).

Jim graduated from the LifeBalance program, and then decided to join ProActive as a member. He trains twice a week with Anthony Sobotka, the exercise physiologist he met in the program. “Although my physical condition is not perfect, it’s a whole lot better than it was,” Jim said. “The group at ProActive helped guide me through a very difficult time in my life, and for that I am very grateful.”

For more information about the LifeBalance for Heart program at ProActive, call (402) 486-7730.

## Selfless servants devoted to chapel

Madonna’s chapel holds a special place in Cindy Rempe’s heart. Cindy, a nurse at St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center, started attending daily Mass

when her father was a patient here seven years ago. She continued that tradition when her father-in-law was a



resident on the Long Term Care unit. “They both received such great care at Madonna,” recalled Cindy. She felt drawn to the chapel and the spacious design that incorporates abundant, natural light. “The chapel is very peaceful and uplifting to me,” said Cindy.

Rev. Steve Cooney, staff priest, had mentioned to Cindy that the rose-colored vestments he donned for special services were borrowed. Vestment colors are used to represent the mood of the Mass being celebrated. The rose color is used on Gaudete Sunday (third Sunday of Advent) and on Laetare Sunday (fourth Sunday of Lent). Cindy decided Father should have his own garment and volunteered her seamstress skills. “Fr. Cooney is very kind-hearted, and I wanted to do something to help him out,” said Cindy. She located a pattern, bought the material and completed the vestment in one day.

Cindy also donated an elaborate “Jesse Tree” to the chapel that she crafted out of fabric. Father had shared his memories with Cindy of using a Jesse Tree during Advent to teach about the Old Testament. It’s a unique Advent tree that represents the family tree, or genealogy, of Jesus Christ. Each day of Advent, a Biblical story is shared and one of the homemade ornaments is added to the tree. Once again, Cindy donated the materials for this special project. “It was great to be able to utilize the Jesse Tree during Advent to point out all of the symbols leading up to the Christ Child,” said Father.

Cindy’s husband, Larry, also volunteers as an acolyte at Madonna, assisting with the popular Saturday afternoon Mass. Father said he is very appreciative of the extra help with the large number of parishioners attending this service.

Larry and Cindy continued their altruistic efforts by funding the purchase of 200 meditation booklets for each of the following liturgical seasons: 2010 Lent and Easter, 2010 Advent/Christmas, 2011 Lent and Easter. “I really appreciate the way Larry and Cindy each share their talents so willingly and generously with Madonna,” said Father. He noted there are many talented and generous people here at Madonna. “Cindy and her husband, Larry, are two of those people,” added Father.

## Angel Dog volunteers carry on Valentine’s tradition

Valentine’s Day came early at Madonna when 22 Angel Dog teams arrived to deliver festive red carnations and brighten the day for patients and residents on Saturday morning, Feb. 13. There was an enthusiastic showing of Angel Dog volunteers who helped carry out the Valentine tradition at Madonna.

Thank you to the following volunteers and their pets who helped with the annual event:

- Burdette Schoen and Reign
- Dan Kehler and Max
- Linda Benton and Benson
- Daveen Renner and Missy
- Wendy McCoy and Kia Marie
- Kathy Phillip and Ali
- Pat Yates and Annie
- Velda Brady and Izzy
- Julie Reed and Jobie
- Donna Cordle and Sasha Rae
- Kathie Putensen and Zoe
- Pat Bryant and Molly
- Dian Peterson and Lexi
- Jackie Gess and Mandy
- Florafae Schoen and Pi
- Judy Burke and Oscar
- Andi Morris and Maya
- Olivia Wallace and Stacie
- Susan Fertig and Zoe

- Denise Ewing and Millie
- Nancy Lueking (volunteer)
- Cindy Arnold (volunteer)
- Jo Ann Drueke (Volunteer Services Coordinator)



The Angel Dog volunteer teams gathered for a group photo on Feb. 13 before heading off to deliver red carnations and Valentine wishes to Madonna patients and residents.



Donna Cordle and her Pomeranian, Sasha Rae, greet Estrellita Lorenzo on Madonna’s pediatric unit.

## > CALENDAR

- Feb 25** **CPR Recertification**  
Agee  
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. to 5-9 p.m.  
Call 6550 or 6476 to register
- Feb 26** **Adult NDT**  
Sheridans  
5:30-8:30 p.m.  
Contact your supervisor for approval and to register  
*Registration deadline is Feb. 22*  
10 CH appropriate for PT/OT  
Attendance required Feb. 26-27
- Feb 27** **Adult NDT**  
Therapy Gym  
8 a.m.-4:45 p.m.  
(continued from Feb. 26)
- Pediatric NDT**  
Sheridans  
8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
Contact your supervisor for approval and to register  
Enrollment is limited.  
Preregistration required.  
*Registration deadline is Feb. 22*  
7 CH appropriate for PT/OT
- March 1** **NEO**  
Systems Workshop  
Flanagan  
9 a.m.-Noon

### Chapel Services

Catholic Mass is offered Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 4 p.m., Wednesday and Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and Saturday at 4:30 p.m. The Worship Service is Thursday at 10:30 a.m. Hymn/Music Program is Sunday at 3:30 p.m.

**Feb 21** Sue Morrissee and Dan  
**Feb 28** Silvia Griffith

Do you belong to a group or congregation that hasn't performed at Madonna? We welcome new talent. Contact Steve Werner at ext. 6831 or [swerner@madonna.org](mailto:swerner@madonna.org).

### Got ice? Grab the green bucket

Old Man Winter just doesn't want to loosen his grip this year. The maintenance crew does a fantastic job keeping the parking lots and sidewalks cleared. However, the hospital operates 24/7, and it's difficult to maintain all areas as the snow melts and refreezes. Here's a small way employees can help keep each other safe.

In the east parking lot (outside the NOPS entrance) and in the southwest parking lot (just south of the 3-11 parking), there are new green buckets with ice melt/sand compound. If you notice a slippery area, please take a few minutes to sprinkle some of the mixture on the ground.

This simple action could save an injury to a coworker, patient, visitor or yourself.

## Some good news for chocolate lovers

By Paul Nathenson, CRRN, HN-BC, MPA

In a new clinical study published online in the American Chemical Society's "Journal of Proteome Research," scientists found that eating dark chocolate reduces anxiety as evidenced by a decrease of the stress hormone cortisol and catecholamines. Cortisol is known as the stress hormone because it is secreted during the stress response, also known as "fight or flight." Cortisol produces a heightened sense of awareness and an energy burst. It also increases blood pressure and heart rate to help the body take evasive action. However, most stress is perceived or emotional and does not require a heightened physical state. Therefore, cortisol secretion from perceived stress only serves to unnecessarily raise blood pressure and heart rate, while over taxing the system.

According to the study, an ounce or more of dark chocolate daily can significantly reduce cortisol levels. Dark chocolate also contains antioxidants, which are phytochemicals that protect your health on a cellular level, preventing damage from free radicals. Dark chocolate contains cocoflavonoids, which are thought to be heart healthy and may reduce cholesterol levels. Milk chocolate, on the other hand, has lower levels of cocoflavonoids and contains more fat from milk, a combination that may actually increase cholesterol levels. Dark chocolate is a reasonable indulgence. However, since flavonoids are bitter, most chocolate has a high sugar content and like all things in life, should be enjoyed in moderation.

*Source: American Chemical Society (2009, November 12). New evidence that dark chocolate helps ease emotional stress. ScienceDaily.*



Christine Carbon-Bartels (right) gets the inside scoop on "Love, Chocolate and Health" from Fit for Work staff Brittany Baack (left) and Karen McWilliams. The duo shared the nutritional lowdown on chocolate (darker is better) and offered free samples of a variety of delectable chocolates to Madonna employees.

### Coworkers kick butts

There were 500 fewer cigarettes lifted to participant's lips during the first month of the "Kick Butts Challenge." That's an average reduction of more than four packs per person! Congratulations to the six Madonna coworkers that accepted the challenge to cut their tobacco use in the Kick Butts program, offered in conjunction with the Lifestyle Challenge. "Madonna's Fit for Work team is so proud of their accomplishments," said Fit for Work Corporate Wellness Developer Michelle Welch.

If you'd like help in reducing tobacco use or quitting the habit altogether, Madonna Fit for Work offers support through the Kick Butts program and also "Fit to Quit." Fit to Quit is an individualized program that can be started at any time. For more information, contact Karen Rehm, Madonna Fit for Work's tobacco cessation expert, at [krehm@madonna.org](mailto:krehm@madonna.org) or 486-7703.

### Ergonomic tip

Workstation configuration and body characteristics can be limiting factors when it comes to keyboard platform selection. A broad-shouldered worker may prefer a wider keyboard/mouse setup, whereas a petite person may require a closer mousing surface to reduce reach. Remember, a keyboard platform provides adjustability, but a "one size fits all" approach won't work. The platform should be tailored to each individual's preferences.

If you would like a workstation analysis, contact Jody Luzum in Employee Health at ext. 6413.

### Larson assumes nurse therapist role

Jacqueline Larson, RN, has accepted the nurse therapist position for St. Jane de Chantal's Transitional Care Unit (TCU).

During her 13-year career at Madonna, Jacque has held positions as nursing assistant, charge nurse and unit manager.

Jacque is a graduate of Southeast Community College (SECC) in Lincoln where she received her associate degree in nursing in 2002. She recently completed a Certificate in Gerontology. Prior to nursing school, Jacque earned an associate degree in business management and accounting from SECC.

"Jacque brings a high level of clinical expertise to her new position," said Rebecca Seeber, nurse manager. Jacque looks forward to the challenges of her new role. "I'm excited about learning the processes and regulations for TCU," said Jacque. She plans to make building relationships with staff, patients and families a top priority. "Jacque will be very valuable to the success of TCU," added Rebecca.



*All people smile in the same language.  
A happy heart makes the face cheerful...*

Proverbs 15:13